

the subject; it is not to the clergy that we owe the coarse caricatures that we find here and elsewhere, exhibited to ridicule the monks, but to the freemasons; and unless the subject of construction had been taken up by such a body, the continuous chain could not have been so admirably preserved. There would have been some sudden change of style; we should not have had following the examples we have mentioned, the groining of the south transept, followed by that of the north, then that of the choir and presbytery; afterwards the perfection of what we find in the cloister, and the nice application of both styles in the Lady Chapel. An individual genius may strike out some new style, though the instances are rare; but we cannot break in upon a train of progressive improvements without its being more apparent than exhibited in this Abbey Church, or in others where the styles follow in regular succession. An architect cannot hope to invent until he has made himself master of all he has done—and can the clergy devote their time to so secular a calling? The various styles are all beautiful of their kind, each has its genius and proportions. They must be understood before they can be advanced. In the styles of the middle ages we trace this progressive advancement, we proceed from the Saxon heavy masses to the more delicate, we have no fetters put upon this advancement, we move on until we arrive at perfection. And we are persuaded that as quantity of material is dispensed with, science and knowledge of its quality make up for the loss. We come to the delicate style of the sixteenth century, by slow yet measured degrees. There is not a link wanting. The lodges of freemasons, like an individual, seem to increase in knowledge as they increase in years."

It is to be regretted, that at the Reformation the entire conventual buildings had not been preserved, for then we might have been able to obtain ideas of the domestic manners, and of the amount of hospitality and charity of the time. It was said that the destruction of the subsidiary buildings was to be justified by a regard for the beauty of the cathedral which they surrounded, but he thought the true way to restore the edifice to its original beauty, was not to destroy, but to restore those buildings. It was quite a mistaken notion to suppose that isolation was a necessary condition of the beauty of a building; and the greatness of this cathedral consisted in the number of its buildings, which had almost outnumbered the rest of the city, each building differing from the rest, yet all preserving the same religious character, the cathedral giving expression to the whole. Mr. Cressy ended thus:—

"Before we conclude, it is necessary perhaps that we again refer to the chronological history of this beautiful structure: in it we see the gradual progress the science of architecture made during nearly 600 years. In 1053, was consecrated the Saxon church; 1088 to 1100, the Norman was in progress; 1228 to 1243, the nave vaulted, and the miseries of the choir introduced; 1307 to 1329, south aisle of the nave by Abbot Thokey; 1329 to 1337, the transepts in progress of alteration by John Wygemore; 1337 to 1351, the choir vaulted by Adam de Staunton; 1351 to 1377, portions of the presbytery by Thomas de Horton; 1381 to 1412, the cloister by Walter de Froucester; 1421 to 1437, west front, and of nave and south porch by John Morwent; 1450 to 1457, central tower by Abbot Seashrook; 1457 to 1472, Lady Chapel by Richard Hanley; 1472 to 1499, Lady Chapel by William Farley; 1514, parts of choir by William Parker. And now let me thank you for your patient attention to a discourse, which to some of my hearers may have appeared somewhat prolix, but which is very inadequate to its subject. On the opinions I have advanced, I have been guided solely by a desire to ascertain the truth, and should subsequent inquiry prove that I am in error, I shall most willingly acknowledge it. We have all some favourite theory, which we naturally seek to substantiate; but it is not a healthy zeal which endeavours to distort facts to our purpose: my only object is to diffuse an interest in, and an admiration for, the exquisite specimens of our noble art, bequeathed to us by our ancestors, whether Saxon or Norman. Eight centuries have passed away since the iron heel of the latter was placed on the neck of the former; and if some few traces of the injury yet remain, let it be our endeavour to obliterate

them; henceforth let the Norman allow that he found in the land of the Angles, reared to the most sublime of purposes, many noble structures, and let the Saxon gratefully admit that to the Norman he is indebted for the preservation and adornment of these evidences of a common Christianity."

#### GROTESQUE CARVINGS OF THE MIDDLE AGES. *Gloucester Cathedral.*

Mr. Wright's remarks on this subject, previously alluded to, were to the following effect:—

He said, that "since the discussion in the morning he had very carefully examined the sculptures in the cathedral; and his object in again adverting to the subject was simply to show how necessary it was, in endeavouring to explain branches of art in the middle ages, to be well acquainted with the literature of those ages. A question had arisen that morning, as to whether the grotesque carvings of the seats of the choir were the work of the monks and clergy or of the freemasons. Mr. Cressy had adopted the latter opinion; but he (Mr. Wright) differed from that conclusion; and his reason for disagreeing with it was, that there was not a single one of those sculptures that had not its representative, and he believed type, in the literature of the day, which literature originated with, and was peculiar to the clergy, using the term in a more extensive sense than at present,—the clergy in those days meaning every person who had received an education, and who was thus entitled to the benefit of clergy. Amongst those persons was a large body of literature, differing very much from the monkish legends and theological writings, and representing to those legends and theological writings quite as large a proportion as the popular literature bears to the theological works of the present day. This literature consisted of all sorts of treatises on science, amongst which the most popular was that called 'Bestialis, or Natural History,' under which head were described numbers of peculiar animals, which existed not only in nature, but in fables and stories. There were also historical, and various works of amusement, which represented the spirit of the monks and clergy of that day much more accurately than it was exhibited in their legends and theology. There was not a single representation in the sculptures of the cathedral which could not be found described in the old literature of the day. In some churches it was not uncommon for the sculptures to represent the whole history of some well-known romance; and even in the cathedral he found a carving of a combat between a knight and a giant; which combat he believed he could find described in one of the romances to which he had alluded. Therefore, archaeologists should always well consider before they pronounced an opinion upon works of art executed in the middle ages, and should endeavour to combine upon every occasion a knowledge of art and a knowledge also of the literature of the period to which their inquiries referred. He disagreed with the opinion first formed, that the masons were more likely to be the authors of those particular satires upon the monks, and upon the morals of the age, than the clergy themselves. But the truth was, that those popular books of the middle ages contained things which, if not seen, we should be perfectly astonished to be told were to be found there. There were satires and satirical allusions of every description; and in some of them even the Scriptures themselves were burlesqued. There was, for instance, a manuscript gospel of St. Pancras now in the British Museum, which if published at the present day would be visited with extreme punishment. It was not necessary, therefore, to suppose these sculptures to be the works of the masons, or that the monks were at all scrupulous in carrying their satires into the carvings of their churches."

As Mr. Repton's paper also refers especially to the cathedral, it may properly follow here.

#### ON THE SHAPE OF THE ARCH, WITH REFERENCE TO THE DATE OF BUILDINGS.

I have observed in many semi-circular arches erected before the year 1100, that the crown is slightly sunk, owing to the great weight they have to support. I imagine that in consequence of this, the arches were from that period sometimes struck from two centres, the

points being so near to each other as hardly to be perceptible, as in the west front of Saint Denis, near Paris (the work of Abbot Suger), and also in the great arch in Boreham Church, Essex, &c.

I have already said, in a paper which was read at Canterbury, that we are not to depend upon the shape of the arch, to ascertain the date of the building, but rather to look to the details of mouldings, capitals of columns, &c. The members of the society have now an opportunity of examining the semi-circular door on the north side of the west end of Gloucester Cathedral, which from its details does not appear to be earlier than the time of Henry III. (the same may be said of the round-headed windows at St. Nicholas's Church, near the cathedral). The sharp-pointed arch, with its zig-zag mouldings above the door, appears to be of an earlier date than the door itself; i.e. about the time of King Stephen."

About the end of the reign of Stephen, the transition style, as it is now called, began, when we often find the mixture of the pointed with the round-headed arch.

We may smile to hear it asserted, that the pointed arch was first introduced in 1133, when one was lately discovered in a Roman barrow at Roughham, near St. Edmund's Bury.

A curious specimen of the next style, and worthy of notice, in Gloucester Cathedral, is seen in the Monk's Treasury—its trefoil arches and the trefoil and quatrefoil holes are as if carved into a plain flat wall without any return mouldings. The capitals of columns, with their bold foliage, are peculiar to the time of Henry III. The great circle in the centre is composed of eight pointed arches, of which four have a rude and an early specimen of the "tracery within tracery," which afterwards prevailed much in the reigns of Edward I., II., III., &c.

The heavy style of architecture of Edward I. and II. may be seen in the work of Abbot Thokey in the south side of the nave. The plain sharp gables on the buttresses are admired by many of the young architects of the present day, but are sometimes improperly introduced in their designs, as, for example, when mixed with the Tudor style of the 15th and 16th centuries.

The arch of the great window at the west end of the cathedral (erected about 1377), is very ungraceful, being struck from two centres, the ends being slightly rounded off.

The new part of the choir with the rich tracery in the windows, not being subdivided in half days or lights, reminds us of the work of William of Wickham at Winchester. The Lady's Chapel was executed as late as 1499, by Abbot Farleigh, who had the good taste to prefer the simplicity of the style of the choir to that which generally prevailed in the 15th and 16th centuries.

The monument of Edward II. is a fine specimen of the period (after 1327). The lower parts, with the ogee arches and tracery, remind us of the Prior's Chapel at Ely, and appear to have been erected nearly at the same time. The elegant pinnacles, with their sharp crocketed gables above, are certainly an improvement upon those erected about the end of Henry III. or beginning of Edward I.

The porch is not of an earlier date than Henry V., as the arms of England are represented by three fleurs-de-lis instead of semé. It is much to be regretted that the six large statues are missing, which have destroyed the appearance of the perpendicular lines, so much admired in Gothic Architecture; a character very different from the three-gothic towers at Westminster Abbey, which are subdivided into a number of horizontal cornices.

#### ST. MARY'S CHURCH, BRIDGEWATER.—

A correspondent of the *Bridge-water Times* notices the gradual decay of the fine parish church of that town, and shews that immediate attention should be paid to it.

\* The round-headed arch may be found as late as Edward IV., or Henry VII., as in a window from Knappton Church, Norfolk, which can never be mistaken for Norman architecture, nor can the beautiful wooden chest in Prestington Church of the 14th or 15th century. The semi-circular doorway in Wingham Church, Sussex, from the details of its mouldings, does not appear to be much earlier than the year 1500.

† The bad taste of the ogee tracery in the three arches, which commonly prevailed about the years 1500 to 1550, were soon afterwards exploded. I believe they are rarely to be met with at so late a period as Richard II.